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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 CAIRO 005240

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MEPN](#) [KPAL](#) [UNSC](#) [ARABL](#) [MOPS](#) [EG](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)
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SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET TO DISCUSS
LEBANON, ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE, AND DARFUR

REF: A. CAIRO 5207

[1](#)B. STATE 136507
[1](#)C. CAIRO 5077

Classified by Minister-Counselor for Economic and Political
Affairs William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) In an effort to be seen as "doing something," Arab League foreign ministers met in Cairo August 20 to address assistance for the reconstruction of Lebanon, to discuss reviving the Arab-Israeli peace process, to debate the utility of an Arab Summit, and to offer political support to Sudan. Local contacts described the meeting as short on substance, with ministers voicing support for Lebanon and Sudan, promising to "study" an Egyptian plan to coordinate Arab aid to Lebanon, and avoiding detailed discussion of a League proposal to revive Arab-Israeli peace talks under UN Security Council auspices. No financial pledges were announced for Lebanon, nor were other pressing regional issues (Iran, Iraq, or Somalia) formally discussed. In three separate resolutions (texts below), ministers pledged support for the Government of Lebanon as they lashed out at Israel, took unhelpful positions on Darfur, and agreed to go ahead with plans to bring the Arab-Israeli peace file to the UN Security Council. End summary.

Arab Foreign Ministers Address Lebanon, Darfur

[1](#)2. (C) Following an August 20 extraordinary session of foreign ministers at the Arab League's Cairo headquarters, Nazih El Negeiry of the Egyptian foreign minister's personal staff told poloff that the ministers agreed to three resolutions (below) dealing with Lebanon, Darfur, and Arab-Israeli peace talks. Describing the Lebanon resolution, Negeiry said the text presented by Lebanese Foreign Minister Salouk was amended multiple times following interventions by the Syrian AL Permrep (Syrian FM Muallem did not attend the meeting). In particular, delegates argued whether the resolution should specifically acknowledge Hizbollah's role in resisting Israel's military campaign (as Syria wanted), he said. After much argument, compromise language was adopted that did not mention the group, but rather commends the "steadfastness" and "valiant resistance" of Lebanon against the "brutal Israeli aggression." Negeiry suggested that the Lebanese minister had been expected to side more closely with Hizbollah during this meeting, given his close association with the organization. Arab League Secretariat staffer Talal Elamine commented to poloff that the Lebanese minister had

committed to PM Seniora's original draft text that addresses Lebanon's (vice Hizbollah's) resistance toward Israel.

13. (C) Asked about an Arab position on Hizbollah disarmament, Negeiry said agreement on any such text would have been "impossible" under present circumstances, "especially with Syria in attendance" at the meeting. This issue, of course, is at the heart of current events and will have to be worked out by the Lebanese themselves in their national dialogue. Negeiry indicated interest in Washington's position on Hizbollah disarmament, suggesting his personal view that the USG was sending "mixed signals" on the issue.

An Egyptian Aid Coordination Plan?

14. (C) Negeiry and Elamine confirmed media reports that Egypt had presented a plan to address coordination of financial and other reconstruction assistance for Lebanon. The 3-page paper, they said, had been shared days earlier with the Government of Lebanon, but no action was taken on the subject by the AL foreign ministers. The Lebanese delegation reportedly pledged to "study the proposal" and follow up with the Egyptians and other League states. As for Arab contributions to Lebanese reconstruction efforts, Elamine stated that Arab governments were already doing what they felt they needed to do for Lebanon on a bilateral basis. There was little support, he believed, for an Arab-specific mechanism to distribute such assistance. Arab states would be much more likely, he speculated, to contribute to international financial mechanisms managed by the World Bank or other credible multilateral bodies.

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Re-Launching the Arab-Israeli Peace Track

15. (C) Arab ministers also agreed during the meeting to a resolution confirming the League's intention to press for a resumption of peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors under the auspices of the UNSC. The resolution repeats the League's determination to prompt a ministerial meeting in September 2006 on the margins of the UN General Assembly meetings in New York that would approve "effective and specific defined mechanisms for quick resumption of direct negotiations among concerned parties." Nevertheless, Elamine reported, a small group of ministers would meet again in the coming weeks to explore the specific modalities, goals, and priorities for such a meeting. Elamine said their aim was to prompt a ministerial meeting in New York during the second half of September at the Security Council. According to Negeiry, the main states pushing this initiative -- "including Egypt" -- first needed to work out the specific terms of reference and other key details (ref B).

Unhelpful Positions on Darfur

16. (C) At the behest of Sudan, the AL foreign ministers also agreed to an unhelpful resolution that largely supports GOS positions vis-a-vis the situation in Darfur (text below). The ministers repeated their earlier commitment to providing funding for the African Union's Darfur mission following the expiry of the AU's current mandate September 30, 2006. Likewise, the resolution calls for allowing the GOS more time to ensure security in Darfur, and calls for a postponement of a scheduled Security Council meeting to address a draft Darfur resolution. Nowhere does the text address a possible transition of the AU's mission to the United Nations.

17. (U) Lebanon Resolution

Begin unofficial Embassy translation of text:

Situation in Lebanon

At the ministerial level, the Arab League Council met in extraordinary session August 20, and after reviewing the AL Secretariat memorandum and a report by the AL ministerial

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delegation sent to the United Nations to discuss Israel's aggression toward Lebanon:

And, after restating support for previous AL Resolutions 6657 (July 15, 2006), 6660 (August 7, 2006), and its statement of August 2, 2006:

And, after reviewing the statement offered by the head of the Lebanese delegation, and in light of earlier interventions by ministers and representatives of the Secretary General, ministers:

-- Praised the steadfastness of Lebanon and its valiant resistance in facing the Israeli offensive (pray for God's mercy on the souls of Lebanon's martyrs) and considered the unity of the Lebanese people in the face of the aggression and their support for their government and state in various fields as a guarantee for Lebanon's future, security, and stability.

-- Emphasized complete Arab solidarity with Lebanon and provided political support to the Lebanese Government to ensure Lebanese national unity, security, stability, and sovereignty over all its territories.

-- Praised the role of the AL ministerial delegation through its contacts and negotiations with the Security Council and UN Secretary General, in collaboration with the Lebanese government, and for its ability to introduce amendments and additions to UNSCR 1701, and thanked the Government of Qatar for its significant role as the Arab Member on the Security Council.

-- Welcomed the Lebanese government's decision to send the Lebanese army to the south and support its mission, as decreed by the Lebanese Cabinet, so that only legitimacy would prevail in that region. Called upon friendly countries to contribute quickly to enhance UNIFIL troops, as stipulated

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by UNSCR 1701.

-- Called upon the Security Council to pressure Israel to immediately lift its air, land, and naval blockades on Lebanon, considering these blockades as violations of UNSCR 1701.

-- Emphasized the importance of implementing a sustainable and permanent cease-fire, condemned the Israeli breaches and violations of UNSCR 1701, held Israel responsible for those violations, called upon the Security Council to press Israel to honor a total cease-fire and withdraw its troops from Lebanon beyond the Blue Line, in addition to halting Israeli violations to Lebanese sovereignty (land, navy, or air).

-- Emphasized the importance of adopting the seven-point plan proposed by the Government of Lebanon and called upon the UN Secretary General and the Security Council to consider the

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Lebanese Government's proposal on Shebaa Farms, in accordance with UNSCR 1701, and called upon all concerned parties to

cooperate with the UN to reach solutions that would guarantee Lebanese rights.

-- Held Israel completely responsible for the aggression and its results, and the deliberate destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure and the killing of civilians, considered as flagrant violations of international law, particularly international human rights law and the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Called for Israel to compensate the Government of Lebanon and its people for the human losses, the material damages, and the grave losses incurred by the Lebanese economy as a result of Israel's aggression.

-- Welcomed the UN Human Rights Council resolution pertaining to Israeli violations of human rights during its aggression on Lebanon. Called upon the investigation committee formed by the UNHRC to review immediately those violations and take necessary actions. Considered Israeli actions in Lebanon as war crimes that require bringing its perpetrators to justice before the specialized international forums.

-- Thanked countries that provided immediate support and expressed appreciation for continuing efforts to assist with the reconstruction of Lebanon and the rescue of war victims.

-- Expressed a willingness to continue Arab efforts toward the reconstruction of Lebanon and efforts to develop its economy, in coordination with the Government of Lebanon. Called upon the UN's Economic and Social Council to establish a mechanism for such support and to hold an emergency session in Beirut for that purpose as soon as possible.

-- Requested the Secretary General to conduct necessary contacts and consultations to implement this resolution.

End text of Lebanon resolution.

18. (U) Darfur resolution:

Begin unofficial Embassy translation of text:

Developments of the Situation in Darfur.

The AL Ministerial Council met on August 20 and after reviewing the AL Secretariat memorandum, a memorandum presented by the delegate of the Government of Sudan, and recommendations from the AL's Ministerial Council on Sudan, the ministers:

-- Emphasized the Arab League's Khartoum Summit Resolution 344 (dated March 29, 2006) pertaining to Darfur which emphasized continuation of the African Union's efforts and accomplishment of its mission to deal with the Darfur crisis, especially with regards to political mediation and support for monitoring the ceasefire agreement. Assured that provision of additional troops to the region would require the consent of the Government of Sudan. Called on Arab countries to provide financial and material support to the African Union mission, to enable it to pursue its mission. Called upon African/Arab countries to enhance its participation in the African Union mission with troops and observers for Darfur.

-- Committed to bear the expenses of the African Union mission in Darfur for six months as of October 1, 2006.

-- Praised the role of the African Union mission in Darfur in maintaining security and stability and called for states to provide necessary funding and support to pursue the AMIS

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mission.

-- Requested the Security Council to provide the Sudanese Government with enough time to implement the UN plan presented in August 2, 2006, to improve the situation and

maintain security in Darfur, as agreed between the President of Sudan and the UN Secretary General.

-- Called for the postponement of a Security Council meeting scheduled for next week in New York - in collaboration with the African Union, the Arab League, and the Organization of Islamic Conferences - to give a chance for consultations and coordination with regional organizations concerned with the situation in Darfur and for the African Union Troops there.

-- Assigned the Council Presidency, the Arab representative on the Security Council, and the AL Secretary General, to closely monitor talks at the Security Council on Darfur and to work on reaching an acceptable resolution there, similar to the Arab League resolution on Darfur.

-- Called upon Arab states to fulfill their commitments based on the March 2006 Arab League Summit in Khartoum in regards to paying the costs of the African Union mission in Darfur, and activating political and diplomatic contacts with all parties related to Darfur, to prioritize a peaceful solution.

-- Referred to the Secretary General's commitment mentioned in the African Summit in Banjul, Gambia calling for the extension of the African Union's Darfur mission mandate through December 31, 2006 in addition to providing needed financial credits for the African Union mission until January 1 2007.

-- Welcomed the Abuja peace agreement on Darfur signed May 5, 2006 under the leadership of the African Union. Expressed appreciation for the Arab League's role in collaboration with the UN and the international partners to reach that agreement.

-- Called upon the Sudanese armed troops that did not sign the peace agreement in Darfur to sign and calling the international community to exert effort to have those groups participate

-- Called upon the international community to immediately fulfill its obligations to support the African Union to enable it to effectively implement peace in Darfur, maintain security and stability in the region, and enhance security and stability in Sudan and the entire area.

-- Encouraged member states to provide financial and humanitarian support for Darfur. Called upon the international community to provide support and necessary funding to return refugees, to help with Darfur reconstruction, and to help with development.

-- Expressed appreciation for the role played by the AL's Secretary General, and requested that he continue his efforts

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with the Government, the Sudanese parties, and regional and international agencies to enhance peace in Sudan. Likewise, he was requested to present a report to the AL Ministerial Council on Darfur.

End resolution text on Darfur.

19. (U) Resolution on Invigorating the Arab-Israeli Peace Process.

Begin unofficial Embassy translation of text:

Calling on the UN Security Council to hold a ministerial meeting to review the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on all tracks:

The AL Ministerial Council met on August 20 and after reviewing the Secretariat's Memorandum, AL resolutions 6658 (dated July 15, 2006) and 6661 (dated August 7, 2006) - in which the Security Council is asked to review the Arab-Israeli struggle in a radical and inclusive manner in the light of the dangers posed to regional peace and security due to continuation of that struggle - statements by

ministers and other delegation heads, and the Secretary General, decided to:

-- Call upon the Security Council to hold a ministerial meeting in September of 2006 to review the settlement of the Arab-Israeli struggle in accordance with the principles of peace, earlier UNSC resolutions - especially resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), and 1515 (2003), as well as

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the principle of land for peace by approving effective and specific defined mechanisms for quick resumption of direct negotiations among the parties, with total Security Council supervision of these negotiations, and setting a time-frame to conclude the talks and agree on international guarantees for implementation.

-- Assign the Arab Group in New York to present an official request to hold the previously mentioned meeting of the Security Council.

-- Assign the AL Council, s current Presidency (UAE), Qatar - as current Arab Security Council member, the AL Secretary General, and members of the Arab Peace Initiative Committee to conduct necessary consultations immediately and follow up on the implementation of this resolution.

End resolution text on the peace process.
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